

Here's the story. Such Things. Sometimes complicated shit happens at the worst time.

We almost had the build design complete, we had no idea we were in for big problems.

We were undertaking the huge, never-ending task of designing & keeping up new Helicopters for the Force to use & we were in for a shock.

This guy took on the most frustrating problems the Helicopter Mission faced & came up with what you might call a small step towards fixing what had grown into a big mess.

We had all tried to make improvements on the process for months & months on what we thought would be a disaster in the making. What a predicament to be in.

We had a long, mind-numbing list of Spare Parts for the Helicopter that we would need & the manual for ensuring quality & coordination had pages of Bullshit that none of us could read without going nuts.

So this guy had a new way of listing the damn parts that actually had the beginnings of a Logical System, but we were skeptical since we had had to put up with it for so long that we were actually used to it.

He was big on Quality in putting together requirements for the Helicopters, wanting to get the most bang for his buck so he would get promoted quickly.

The New Helicopter was almost ready to go, after what seemed forever to all of us. The unit we were assigned to was very, very busy with operational testing & other matters, not thinking at all about how critical spare parts were going to be to the mission.

But, Shit. We found out fast.

The Helicopter was the first of a new class & someone had screwed up & put this guy in charge of dealing with all the Spare Parts, numbering in the thousands.

Consequences were... Screws, Tubes, Blades, Cockpit Electronics, the list went on & on-- all had to be accounted for somehow. Each damn item was required in different amounts. We soon became familiar with them all because this guy wouldn't shut up about it.

He went running his mouth whenever we were unlucky enough to run into him. "What if we ran out of this, what if this broke without a replacement— some of the parts were used in a bunch of different places, like standard-sized gaskets, so he insisted that we keep more of those stocked than some of the other things that would just have to be replaced in one place.

To make matters worse, other units wanted some of the parts for their own shit. If you can believe it, the names of the parts on their lists were totally different, because this guy was only in one place—the bosses hadn't noticed him yet, so other units were behind the curve.

Their lists had little in common with the ones we were working with. This guy's heroic effort to make things simple meant that when we were over there & had to look at their ridiculous charts only ones able to make any sense of the instructions were the ones on the job for a long time.

But this guy was pretty new. He called himself a "Supply Specialist". We thought he was manic. But without his help, stocking all the parts would be a huge headache.

Not that it was easy, by any means. The spare parts were usually ordered when the Helicopter was in the initial stages of being used. Some of them were new & untested designs. Some were stored in an area too remote for us to access.

According to this guy, all hell would break loose if items were added to the list late, or if no one had thought about needing them in bigger quantities. He said a lot of the changes were unanticipated because the initial requirements were entered by someone during initial testing of Helicopters that had no prior history of being used in real missions.

This guy had figured out how to ease the pain somewhat by dealing with the suppliers who were always bitching about specs changing & getting lost in paperwork when they assumed everything was all complete. They wanted more money from us, but this guy had no problem telling them all to Fuck Off.

For decades, the Spare Parts lists were created by an out of date process done mostly by hand. When the lists had to be modified the process wasn't any better. Probably even worse.

But this guy figured out how to reduce miscommunications with the suppliers & speed up the whole operation. The internal paperwork was always messier than shit. Some of the most serious, glaring mistakes usually escaped detection.

All it took was some damn fuckup at headquarters to result in misidentified parts that had no potential to actually be used productively on our helicopter & the money always would come out of our pocket.

We were pretty fucking far from being pleased as punch with the excuses that we always got from the suppliers that didn't have to rely on the Helicopter actually being useful to the mission.

While we were working out butts off to get the Helicopter mission sequence ready, this guy was the only one to actually be ready to deal with spare parts issues day in, day out so we got to appreciate him eventually. He made it his priority.

But when he got rolling, his enthusiasm was pretty tough to deal with. He insisted that we create special spaces designated as exclusive zones for everything we could possibly need if disaster struck.

But the suppliers hadn't even gotten around to start making some of the shit, much less get it delivered for our mission.

We could get some parts that would work in a pinch, but the suppliers were more concerned with units that had more money than we did, as well as newer equipment if you can believe it. Several of our most critical items were not a priority for them at all.

But none of that would faze this guy, he was hell-bent on succeeding & getting promoted if he could just get noticed. It was a classic case of "My mind's made up. Don't feed me anymore bullshit than I can handle" he would always say.

All appeals would be summarily dismissed out of hand. He probably actually believed he was the one in charge. The only thing left to do was to just give up & agree with him. But there is always more to the story. We will get to that another day. Another place & time.